



Cranefield's Multimedia Distance Learning (MDL) Courses

3.1 Introduction: 2010

Registration for Cranefield's first two international MDL courses opened towards the end of 2007, and there are now many students who are benefiting from this convenient and efficient learning method. Anyone in any part of the world with access to the Internet can register at any time for the MDL course(s) of his or her choice. Apart from the original short courses in **Project Management** and **Professional English Skills**, three further courses have been available since the beginning of 2009: **Advanced Writing Skills**, and two **fast-track versions** of the Project Management and Professional English Skills courses, which are designed for teams of two to six students.

The general international fee for each course is charged in Pounds Sterling (GBP). In line with the vision and mission of Cranefield College, in order to support the development of Africa, persons based in Africa may generally pay a lower fee, charged in Rand (ZAR). The 2010 African and international fees for each course are indicated below.

Looking further towards the future, it is anticipated that a number of integrative continuing professional development (CPD) programmes in **Law and Management**, **Law and Psychology**, and **Medicine and Law**, will be launched in 2012, spearheaded by Dr Roche Steyn.

3.2 The 2010 MDL Courses

3.2.1 Project Management: Perspective, Planning and Implementation (Individual/Team Course: 3-4 months)

3.2.1.1 Introduction

This course not only comprehensively covers the fundamental tools and techniques of project management, but also provides perspective on general principles of management that can be applied to most professions. The course is designed to cater both for professional project managers and for other professionals who wish to master the essentials of management for the purpose of applying these in their particular work contexts. The course is open to anyone who is interested in acquiring essential knowledge and skills in project management, regardless of his or her profession, provided that he or she is proficient in English. No other specific

admission requirements are set; however, prospective students must be mindful of the fact that they will be required to apply themselves at the first-degree level.

3.2.1.2 Timing, Duration and Fees

The course is available to any person in any country. MDL courses can be commenced at any time. Materials are dispatched on the next available dispatch date after receipt of the fee (normally within 1-2 weeks). The fee for 2010 for persons based in Africa is R5250.00 (this includes all materials, online support, assessments and examination, and courier to the student's door). The international rate (beyond Africa) is £535.00. Regardless of where the student is based, the course should take around 3-4 months to complete.

3.2.1.3 Study Materials and Support

Course materials include:

- 1) two prescribed textbooks, "Project Management Techniques" and "Effective Project Management" (the first by a British author, and the other by American authors, to provide broader perspective; the latter book also includes a trial version of Microsoft Project, and illustrated explanations of how to use it),
- 2) a lecture DVD set,
- 3) a detailed step-by-step study guide.

The lecturers are available online (via email) to answer any specific questions that a student might have about the work. The student will also complete exercise assignments (based on two or more practical case studies), which will be formally evaluated.

3.2.1.4 Assessment and Awarding of Certificates

Assessment takes the form of a practical examination assignment (based on two or more case studies), which can be undertaken on the last Friday of every month (except December). The student then has 17 days to complete and submit the assignment.

A certificate is awarded upon successful completion of the course. The certificate states that the student has successfully completed **the MDL short course in "Project Management"**, and, should he or she achieve a distinction, this will be clearly so indicated.

3.2.2 Professional English Skills (Individual/Team Course: 2-3 months)

3.2.2.1 Introduction

Sharpening your command of English will contribute exponentially to your professional (and personal) development. The English MDL short course is designed

to enable the busy professional not to lose sight of the essentials of accurate and correct English. The course aims to equip people with essential knowledge and skills in formal English, and to cultivate an orientation of developing these in everyday practice. The benefits of enhanced English skills in the professional context are numerous and significant:

- 1) Effective and efficient communication (most importantly).
- 2) Preventing negative perceptions due to grammatical errors and/or inappropriate tone or usage.
- 3) Enhancing the overall quality of oral presentations and written reports/documents.
- 4) Depending on your professional context, professional credibility could be promoted through your command of language in your oral and written communications.
- 5) Finally, in the academic context, language and writing skills are also indispensable in producing quality assignments, dissertations and theses.

3.2.2.2 Study Materials and Support

Study materials include a two-disc DVD set and a detailed step-by-step study guide, guiding the student through the syllabus and the practical exercises. Aspects covered in the course syllabus (in relation to the benefits enumerated under 3.2.2.1 above) include:

- 1) Understanding basic parts of speech and constructions to improve overall command of the language.
- 2) Avoiding mistakes that are commonly made in real-world contexts.
- 3) Refining vocabulary (selected misused/misunderstood words).
- 4) Practical writing and editing skills.
- 5) Advice on writing assignments and dissertations/theses.

The DVD set for this course provides perspective on the essential knowledge and skills quickly and conveniently. The student has the opportunity to complete two optional practical exercises (following the step-by-step study guide), and must complete one compulsory exercise assignment, before undertaking the final examination assignment.

The lecturers are available online to evaluate the practical exercises, and to provide feedback. The student is expected to sharpen skills in daily practice (implementing the knowledge gained through the course) in his or her particular professional context.

3.2.2.3 Timing, Duration and Fees

The course is available to any person in any country (provided that he or she is already basically proficient in English). As is the case with all MDL courses, anyone may register online at any time, and materials will be dispatched on the next available dispatch date after receipt of the full fee.

The fee for 2010 for persons based in South Africa is R2250.00 (this includes all materials, online support, assessments and examination, and courier to the student's door). The fee is adjusted for other African countries to accommodate international courier. The international rate (beyond Africa) is £265.00. Regardless of where the student is based, the course should take around 2-3 months to complete.

3.2.2.4 Assessment and Awarding of Certificates

Final assessment takes the form of a practical examination assignment, which can be undertaken on the last Friday of every month (except December). The student then has 10 days to complete the assignment.

A certificate is awarded upon successful completion of the course. The certificate states that the student has successfully completed **the short course in "Professional English Skills"**, and, should he or she achieve a distinction, this will be clearly so indicated.

Note: The above two courses (3.2.1 and 3.2.2) may be taken concurrently.

3.2.3 Advanced Writing Skills (Individual Course: 3 months)

3.2.3.1 Admission Requirements and Scope

This course is available to all those who have successfully completed the short course, "Professional English Skills", achieving a mark of 60% or higher. "Advanced Writing Skills" gives you the opportunity to apply yourself in attaining higher levels of skill in accurate and correct writing. It is based on practical hands-on development, relying predominantly on the close interaction between lecturer and student.

Most of the assignments undertaken in the "Advanced Writing Skills" course are similar to those in the "Professional English Skills" course, but they are more extensive and a considerably higher level of mastery is expected. Aspects of style and tone can also be more closely addressed. There are four major assignments (contributing 10% each to the final module mark):

Assignment 1 involves carefully criticising (and correcting) a few pages of your own writing, after the lecturer has provided some guidelines relating to the writing.

Assignment 2 requires accurately editing the complex writing of another (provided by the lecturer).

Assignment 3 entails critically analysing extracts from a book on grammar, usage and effective writing.

Assignment 4 involves accurately using a selection of words.

To pass the course, you must also successfully complete a final practical examination assignment (contributing 60% to the module mark). Success will earn you a certificate affirming that you have successfully completed **the short course in “Advanced Writing Skills”** through Cranfield College, and, should you achieve a distinction, this will be clearly so indicated.

3.2.3.2 Timing, Duration and Fees

The course is available to any person in any country. You may register online at any time. The step-by-step study guide is sent to you online (as PDF) upon payment of the full tuition fee. The 2010 fee for persons based in Africa is R2450.00, and the (non-African) international fee is £275.00. The course should take around three months to complete.

3.2.4 Project Management: Perspective, Planning and Implementation (Fast-track, Team-based Course: 3 weeks)

3.2.4.1 Scope

The fast-track course covers slightly fewer aspects than the MDL short course in Project Management (please see 3.2.1 above), but is much more intensive. The study material is the same as for the short course (except that there is, of course, a different study guide). The most important principles and techniques were selected for the syllabus, and incorporated into a one-day team study session (using the study guide, textbooks and DVDs), followed by a team **exercise** assignment, and a final team **examination** assignment (based on two or more case studies).

Please note that **you must already have assembled your team (of 2 to 6 persons) at the time of registering online for the course.** The members of your team must be in the position to **meet personally for your one-day session** and any subsequent case study discussions (although some of this could also be done via email/skype) for the purpose of your practical assignments.

3.2.4.2 Duration and Assessment

After 2 hours of individual preparation time (in the days preceding the one-day session), the student undertakes the one-day full-time session with his or her team. An able facilitator/coordinator nominated from the team has the task of ensuring that discussions run smoothly and within the times stipulated in the minute-by-minute guidance provided in the study guide. Numerous important discussions (relating to the principles and techniques studied) are scheduled throughout the day. Notes made during these discussions are later submitted in a document to the lecturer for his perusal. A practical formative exercise is also started (with step-by-step guidance from the study guide and DVDs) on the day, and the baseline plan resulting from that

exercise is submitted to the lecturer for evaluation (in the following week).

The exercise assignment is received in the week before the scheduled one-day session (in communication with the lecturer). The one-day session can be arranged for any day of the week (including Saturday/Sunday). The team has 1 week (after the one-day session) to complete the assignment. Upon submitting the assignment, the team then receives the final examination assignment (for which the team then has 2 weeks). An example of the timing is as follows (from 2009):

Saturday, 10 January: One-day team session.

Wednesday, 14 January: Submit final baseline planning exercises and notes on the various prescribed discussions (from the one-day session).

Saturday, 17 January: Deadline for submitting the completed case-study exercise assignment.

Saturday, 31 January: Deadline for submitting the completed final examination assignment.

Each student is awarded a certificate upon successful completion of the course. The certificate states that the student has successfully completed **the team-based course in "Project Management"**, and, should the team achieve a distinction, this will be clearly so indicated.

3.2.4.3 Availability and Fees

The course is available to any team of two to six persons in any country, and you may register online at any time. Please note that you must **each fill in your own online registration form, and indicate the names of your fellow team members** so that the administration can identify your team. The 2010 fee for persons based in Africa is R4250.00 each, and the (non-African) international fee is £435.00. The fee includes all materials, online support, assessments and examination, and courier to the team coordinator's door.

3.2.5 Essential Professional English (Fast-track, Team-based Course: 3 weeks)

3.2.5.1 Scope

The fast-track course covers the same scope as the MDL short course in Professional English (please see 3.2.2 above), but has only two exercise assignments and a final examination assignment. It is also, unsurprisingly, much more intensive than the 3-month course.

Please note that **you must already have assembled your team (of 2 to 6 persons) at the time of registering online for the course**. The members of your team must be in the position to **meet personally for your one-day session** and any subsequent case-study discussions (although some of these could also be done via email/skype) for the purpose of your practical assignments.

3.2.5.2 Duration and Assessment

The students start with a full-time one-day study session (using the study guide and DVDs), with no preparation required. On this first day, they start their first exercise assignment (which involves editing a piece of complex writing). The team then has one week within which to submit the completed exercise assignment. (Each member must sign a declaration of participation in the team assignment). The second exercise assignment (which is individualised) is then started and completed in week two; this assignment involves each student's own writing. The team examination assignment is received at the end of week 2. The team then has one week to submit the completed assignment for examination. An example of the timing is as follows (from 2009):

Saturday, 10 January: One-day team session.

Saturday, 17 January: Deadline for submitting the completed team exercise assignment. Receive individual assignment.

Saturday, 24 January: Deadline for submitting the completed individual exercise assignment. Receive team final examination assignment.

Saturday, 31 January: Deadline for submitting the completed team final examination assignment.

Each student is awarded a certificate upon successful completion of the course. The certificate states that the student has successfully completed **the team-based course in "Professional English"**, and, should the team achieve a distinction, this will be clearly so indicated.

3.2.5.3 Availability and Fees

The course is available to any team of two to six persons in any country, and you may register online at any time. Please note that you must **each fill in your own online registration form, and indicate the names of your fellow team members** so that the administration can identify your team.

The 2010 fee for persons based in South Africa is R1950.00 each (this includes all materials, online support, assessments and examination, and courier to the team coordinator's door). The fee is adjusted for other African countries to accommodate international courier. The international rate (beyond Africa) is currently £225.00 (including international courier).